

Tuesday, December 14, 2010
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Bipartisan Federal Buildings Personnel Training Act Signed Into Law Today

WASHINGTON - A bipartisan bill authored by Representative Russ Carnahan (D-MO) that will save taxpayer dollars and reduce the amount of energy used by the federal government was signed into law by President Obama today.

The *Federal Buildings Personnel Training Act*, which was approved by the Senate in July and passed the House by voice vote on December 1, will help make sure that Federal buildings are properly maintained and operated at their highest performance levels. The bill was introduced on Earth Day by Carnahan and Rep. Judy Biggert (R-IL), and Senators Tom Carper (D-DE) and Susan Collins (R-ME).

"Sustainability and energy conservation isn't just about the air we breathe or the water we drink. It's about saving money for families, businesses and taxpayers," said Rep. Russ Carnahan (D-MO), House sponsor of the legislation and co-chair of the Congressional High-Performance Building Caucus.

"Saving energy and taxpayer dollars should never be a partisan issue. It is always gratifying to work with people who are willing to set politics aside in order to do what's right for the people we represent."

A recent study by the International Facility Management Association showed that for every \$1.00 spent on facility management training, organizations reported receiving an average of \$3.95 in return. The Federal Buildings Personnel Training Act will require the General Services Administration (GSA) to identify core competencies necessary for Federal personnel to maintain Federal buildings in a manner consistent with industry best practices. GSA will then work with private industry and institutions of higher learning to make sure that personnel meet those required competencies.

The bipartisan legislation passed today received broad support from over 50 business, advocacy, trade and building safety organizations, including the U.S. Green Building Council, the National Electrical Manufacturers Association, the National Institute of Building Sciences, the American Institute of Architects, and manufacturers such as Siemens, DuPont and Johnson Controls.

In fiscal year 2008, the energy bill for the Federal Government was \$24.5 billion or about 0.8 percent of total Federal expenditures. Of that \$24.5 billion, over \$7 billion was spent on energy to operate Federal buildings alone. Having made a significant investment to upgrade its facilities for greater energy efficiency, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found a lack of proper expertise and training was a major challenge in reaching energy reduction goals. In order to safeguard this investment, the Personnel Training Act will ensure that GSA has all of the tools necessary to not only retrofit the existing government building stock, but also to ensure that these buildings are properly maintained and operated at their highest performance levels.

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